

# Looking at the School Library An Evaluation Tool

School: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Not Evident (NE)  
In Progress (IP)  
Evident (E)

Access		NE	IP	E
Hours of library service are posted.				
Library is open before school, breaks, lunch, and after school.				
Library opens early in the fall and remains open until close to the end of the school year.				
There is library access during summer school or special sessions.	<i>Is library staff present during summer school so that materials don't disappear and students have access to resources?</i>			
Students are allowed to exchange books frequently.	<i>There might be a one or two-book limit, but can be books be exchanged as soon as the child has read them? Two books for two weeks is not good.</i>			
Students are allowed to take library books home.	<i>Is there training for students to care for books that they borrow? Who is responsible for it?</i>			
Kindergarten students are allowed to check out books. (Elementary)	<i>Can kindergarten students take library books home?</i>			
Library is available for parents to borrow materials.	<i>This might mean that parents borrow using the student's information or the system is set to include family information.</i>			
Electronic resources are networked in library and classrooms (High School).	<i>Most good California high school libraries make their electronic resources available through the library web site on the Internet to allow access from classrooms and home. Does library have a web site?</i>			
Teachers are encouraged to check out library books for use in classroom.	<i>Is there a limit to the number of books that can be checked out to the classrooms or can teachers borrow freely and often?</i>			

Staffing		NI	IP	E
Staff includes a credentialed library media teacher.	<i>A California library media teacher has both a teaching credential and a library media teacher credential</i>			
Staff includes a classified library employee.	<i>Many titles exist for this role. Could be called library tech, library clerk, library aide, library assistant or "librarian."</i>			
Job descriptions exist for library staff	<i>Does library staff have a copy?</i>			
Paid staff present during all hours of operation.	<i>How many hours per week? If not full time, what happens to library access?</i>			
Library staff trained in library procedures and service	<i>Classified staff can get training through county offices, community college programs, regular district events, automation system training, and special library staff development</i>			
Library staff encouraged to attend staff development events	<i>See above.</i>			

Collection		NI	IP	E
Library collection is cataloged and systematically arranged according to accepted standards	<i>Organizing the library by Dewey is the accepted practice for K-12. Organizing by grade levels, Accelerated Reader levels, or any system that doesn't match the call number is bad. Can you easily spot how to locate fiction, non-fiction, reference, and picture books (elem.) by just looking around?</i>			
Library collection includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fiction</li> <li>• Non-fiction</li> <li>• Newspapers</li> <li>• Magazines (with an indexing service)</li> <li>• Encyclopedias (at least one print set not over 3 years old)</li> <li>• Materials in other languages (if appropriate)</li> <li>• Basic reference materials, e.g. current almanacs, dictionaries, current atlas, local phone book, etc.</li> </ul>	<i>For high schools, periodicals with indexing are critical. Paper copies are important even if electronic access is available. Ask: is there a magazine index?</i>			
Library collection is selected with professional input	<i>Is there a Library Selection Committee? District library list of recommended resources?</i>			
District has a written, board approved policy for selection of library materials including how to deal with challenges.	<i>Do school personnel know if this exists and how it works? Do principals, teachers, library personnel know what the procedure is when a book is challenged? Does the library have a copy of the policy?</i>			
Collection is enticing and up-to-date	<b>Average copyright quick test:</b> Count the number of books in the 629's. Total the copyright dates of all books in the 629's and divide that sum by the total number of books in the 629's. (See example) <b>Enticing test:</b> pull a book. Does it smell okay? Is it clean? Does it have an attractive cover? Are pages torn or missing? Would YOU want to borrow this book?			

Programs		NI	IP	E
School library offers a variety of programs to motivate reading and library use for all levels of the student population	<i>Is there evidence of reading incentive programs, e.g. California Young Reader Medal program, Governor's Reading Award, etc.</i>			
Teachers, parents, students and community members are solicited and involved in the library.				
Library media teacher collaborates with classroom teachers to integrate information skills and use of technology into curriculum				

Facility		NI	IP	E
There is a place called the library that is accessible to all students	<i>A collection in the back of a classroom is not a library. It must be easy for <b>all</b> students and teachers to access.</i>			
Library has a dedicated telephone line	<i>Technology doesn't get more basic than this.</i>			
Library has space and furniture appropriate for students at the school	<i>Elementary: are there low tables and small chairs? Watch for folding chairs that may be unsafe.</i>			
Library is aesthetically pleasing, barrier-free, well lighted and ventilated	<i>Would this be a happy place for you?</i>			
Facility allows for a variety of activities.	<i>Is there room for more than one activity at a time? Are areas clearly labeled? At elementary level, is an area designated for the youngest children?</i>			

Library Administration and Funding		NI	IP	E
School has a plan linked to the district library plan for developing the library	<i>Since 1998, virtually all school districts apply annually for Library Act funding. A district library plan is part of the application process. Is there a copy of the district plan in the library?</i>			
School has a written policy for use of computers and of Internet in the library	<i>Do students have to demonstrate basic skills before using computers independently? Some libraries issue a computer-user license that is displayed on computer when student is working. Does library staff know about district's policy for use of the Internet?</i>			
School library program has a defined budget	<i>\$158.5 million dollars was shared among districts for five years. Though the funding was drastically reduced in 2002-2003, there still should be evidence of library collection improvement in every school.</i>			
Library has a functioning automated circulation system	<i>At the minimum: a system is used to track materials even if only cards and pockets.</i>			
Library has a functioning electronic catalog	<i>Card catalog is converted to electronic. <b>Try looking up a book.</b></i>			
Principal supports school library program	<i>Principal (or appropriate administrator) can articulate the purpose of the school library. Does the principal routinely visit the library?</i>			

## COMMENTS: